



SUCCESS STORY

BOAT LANDING:

New boat landing boosts trade in Mindanao



"Dati, nahirapan kami dito at parang hindi nakikita na pang-business talaga ang dating. Ngayon, may konting porma tayo, parang nakikita ng ibang tao dito peaceful talaga ang lugar, (It used to be difficult here and it didn't look like it was open for business. Now, it looks better, people will see that this is really a peaceful place.)"

**Montawal,
North Cotabato fish dealer**

A motorized outrigger cuts across the clear waters of the Pulangi River, slightly tilting to one side due to the weight of its load. It is crammed with passengers accompanying sacks and boxes filled with produce – corn, rice and fish – coming from the nearby town of Pagalungan, Maguindanao Province, one of the provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

After docking at the Tunggol boat landing, the sacks are swiftly unloaded from the boat and transferred to a waiting shed. The boat's passengers, who are mostly farmers, are met by traders. The haggling begins. After transactions are completed, the produce is loaded into waiting "jeepneys" (mini-buses), to be transported to local and regional market centers.

This is a typical scene at the Tunggol boat landing, a PI.3 million (\$24,000) infrastructure project constructed by the USAID-funded GEM2 Community Infrastructure Program (CIP) in the municipality of Datu Montawal, Maguindanao. The boat landing is among the GEM2 Program's high-impact projects designed to boost rural productivity, lower transport costs, and connect once inaccessible hinterland communities to market centers.

The new facility not only benefits more than 4,400 residents of Datu Montawal through increased trading activity, but also attracts entrepreneurs and traders from outlying areas. In addition, the increased volume of transport and trade enables the municipal government to generate additional revenues. Ronald Bantiding, Municipal Engineer, says the small fee collected at the boat landing will be used for the operation and maintenance costs of the facility and for other development projects in Barangay (villages) Tunggol.

The 16 boat landings completed in central and western Mindanao under the GEM-CIP Program have created business opportunities in the countryside and energized the entrepreneurial spirit among residents in CIP beneficiary-communities. As importantly, the infrastructure projects demonstrate the economic progress that can be achieved by those who choose the path of peace.